multi-platform, multi-os client/server

- Suppose we send data between clients and servers...

- Architectural issues impact client/server code
  - Little-endian/Big-endian issues
    - 0xabcd is a 32-bit value, which is MSB? How is this stored?
    - How big is an int? 32-bits, 64 bits, ...

- Towards raising the level of discussion
  - Worrying about integer byte order is not fun
  - Let’s worry about sending objects back-and-forth, not bytes
  - How do we send and receive objects?
Client/Server Communication

- **The Java stream hierarchy is a rich source of options**
  - Object streams, Data streams, Buffered Readers, ...
  - Often these convert between bytes and characters
    - What’s the story with Unicode? (e.g. compared to ASCII)
    - FileStream, BufferedReader, ...

- **We can read and write objects over sockets**
  - Advantages compared to lower-level protocols?
  - Disadvantages?

- **Issues in understanding and implementing**
  - Where do objects “live”, are classes different?
  - Subclass/Superclass issues
  - What about connection issues (where, how, knowledge)
Clients and Servers: server side

- **Server socket exists on some machine, listens to a “port”**
  - A port isn’t a physical concept, it’s an OS concept
  - The OS manages ports, some services listen at predetermined ports, e.g., mail at port 25
    - User programs use ports above 1024
- **Server gets a connection and handles the request, but what about other connection requests?**
  - Can’t be too busy processing request, or will miss other attempts at connections
  - Spin off handler as a separate program/process

- **Server blocks on accepting connections, new jdk1.4 API for java.nio.channels might improve things**
  - Why is blocking not ideal?
Networked Games

● **What will go over the network?**
  - Board?
  - Move?
  - Other?

● **Where is the controller?**
  - Server?
  - Client?
  - Combination?

● **How does the server work for many games?**
  - Rules important?
Simple Client/Server code

- The example shows how a client communicates commands to server
  - Deciding how to process a command is simple, but not robust/OO in the current model

- How are client and server similar? Different?
  - Both know about all commands?
  - How do they know this?
Architectural considerations

- What can we do to generalize things, move away from chain of if/else code
  - Create commands corresponding to protocol
  - Execute command obtained by map

- What’s in the map? Some commands require state, e.g., more data from server or client
  - Can have a map of string to object, but how to get information into the object?
  - Can map string to object factory, have a per-command factory
  - Factory knows how to create each command
Networked games: ooga to nooga

● **Different games make writing general server difficult**
  - Turn based games...
  - Multiplayer asynchronous games like Boggle...
  - Noah’s Ark, Samegame, ...

● **Nooga story at Duke**
  - Each summer for the past N summers ...
    • Do we have a general, usable architecture?
  - What should we do next?

● **What are key issues in developing networked games**
  - Don’t worry about robustness or generality
From controller to threads

- **Threads are lightweight processes (what’s a process?)**
  - Threads are part of a single program, share state of the program (memory, resources, etc.)
  - Several threads can run “at the same time”
    - What does this mean?
  - Every Swing/AWT program has at least two threads
    - AWT/event thread
    - Main program thread

- **Coordinating threads is complicated**
  - Deadlock, starvation/fairness
  - Monitors for lock/single thread access
Concurrent Programming

- Typically must have method for ensuring atomic access to objects
  - If different threads can read and write the same object then there is potential for problems
    - ThreadTrouble.java example
    - Consider getting x and y coordinates of a moving object
  - If an object is read-only, there are no issues in concurrent programming
    - String is immutable in Java, other classes can have instance variables be defined as final, cannot change (like const)

- In Java, the keyword synchronized is the locking mechanism used to ensure atomicity
  - Uses per-object monitor (C.A.R. Hoare), processes wait to get the monitor, it’s re-entrant
Using synchronized methods

- Methods can be synchronized, an object can be the argument of a synchronized block, a class *cannot* be synchronized
  - Every object has a lock, entering a synchronized method of the object, or using the object in a synchronized block, blocks other threads from using synchronized methods of the object (since the object is locked)
  - If a synchronized method calls another synchronized method on the same object, the lock is maintained (even recursively)
  - Another thread can execute any unsynchronized method of an object O, even if O’s lock is held
  - A thread blocks if it tries to execute a synchronized method of an object O if O’s lock is held by a different thread
Thread classes in Java

● Classes can extend java.lang.Thread or implement java.langRunnable, (note: Thread implements Runnable)
  ➢ A thread’s run method is executed when the thread is started
  ➢ Typically the run method is “infinite”
    • Executes until some final/done state is reached
    • The run method must call sleep(..) or yield(); if not the thread is selfish and once running may never stop
  ➢ A runnable object is run by constructing a Thread object from the runnable and starting the thread

● Threads have priorities and groups
  ➢ Higher priority threads execute first
  ➢ Thread groups can be a useful organizational tool